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To the MEMBERS *of the* METHODIST SOCIETIES *in BRISTOL, in Connection with the late* REV. MR. WESLEY,—*and all Others whom it may concern.*

THE following Addreſs, publiſhed by the London and Briſtol Truſtees laſt Year, and which met with the Approbation of a large Number of the Truſtees and others of the principal Societies in England and Ireland, will ſerve to ſhew the preſent Views of the Briſtol Truſtees, and ſome of their Reaſons for objecting to MR. MOORE.

(COPY.)

An Addreſs to the Truſtees and Others, in the Methodiſt Connection with the late Reverend Mr. Weſley.

DEAR BRETHREN,

THE Truſtees of the Methodiſt Chapels of LONDON and BRISTOL, beholding with the deepeſt Concern, that ſome of thoſe Evils which were foretold by the Rev. Mr. Weſleys, are now creeping in amongſt us, in *Conſequence of a Departure from the original Plan;* find themſelves called forth in Diſcharge of their Duty to God and their Brethren, to bear a public Teſtimony againſt ſuch Alterations and Innovations.

Although Mr. Weſley, by dint of Importunity, near the Cloſe of his Life, was prevailed upon to ordain a few of his Preachers for *America* and *Scotland*, he by no Means intended to extend it, or make it general.—He was aware of the Conſequences of a ſectarian Spirit amongſt the Methodiſts, and publicly and privately cautioned the People againſt it. He ſaw clearly afterwards, the bad Effects *the Ordination Plan* was likely to produce, in promoting a Separation from the Church of England, and frequently ſpoke on the Subject to the People at large, as well as to his Societies. And a few Months before his Death, he publiſhed his "*Further Thoughts on Separation from the Church of England,*" in the Arminian Magazine, of April 1790, Page 214, of which the following is an Extract:

"I never had any Deſign of ſeparating from the Church, I have no ſuch Deſign now. I do not believe the Methodiſts in general deſign it when I am no more ſeen. I do, and will do, all that is in my Power to prevent ſuch an Event. Nevertheleſs, in ſpite of all that I can do, many of them will ſeparate from it; (although I am apt to think not one Half, perhaps not a Third of them.) Theſe will be ſo BOLD and INJUDICIOUS as to form a SEPARATE PARTY, which conſequently will dwindle away, into a DRY, DULL, SEPARATE PARTY. In flat Oppoſition to theſe, I declare once more, THAT I LIVE AND DIE A MEMBER of the Church of England; and that none who REGARD MY JUDGMENT OR ADVICE, will ever ſeparate from it."

Theſe muſt be conſidered as his moſt mature Reflections, founded on long Experience; and we have no Doubt in our Minds but all the Conſequences he foreſaw, will follow *a Departure from our Connection with the Church of England.*

But the Queſtion, although principally, is not entirely, whether the Methodiſts ſhall ſeparate from the Church of England, but whether they ſhall ſeparate from the Church, and every other Denomination with whom any of their Members have had any Intercourſe, and become a diſtinct Body, independent of all.

This we conceive, would be an open Violation of the real and avowed Principles on which the Societies were firſt united together. When Mr. J. and C. WESLEY became itinerant Preachers, and began to form Societies, they utterly diſclaimed any Intention of making a ſeparate Party in the Nation. The Members of their Societies were conſtantly exhorted to attend their reſpective Places of Worſhip, whether the eſtabliſhed Church, or elſewhere; and the Times of Preaching on the Lord's-Day, were ſtudiouſly fixed to give them Liberty ſo to do.

This would alſo make the Societies *ſeparate Churches*, which would entirely overturn the Conſtitution and Spirit of the original Miſſion.—Hitherto the Methodiſts, though for the moſt Part Members of the Church of England, yet juſtly may be conſidered to have been a Kind of middle Link between all religious Parties, uniting them in the Intereſts of experimental Religion and ſcriptural Holineſs; and yet leaving them *uninfluenced*, and at full Liberty to follow their reſpective Modes of Worſhip.—This has been their *peculiar Situation* and *Calling*, their glorying and boaſt. But if the Methodiſts become an independent Body, they depart from their *Calling* and loſe their Glory.

Therefore, we cannot, from this View of Things, encourage or ſupport thoſe Preachers who promote the new Plan of Ordination; becauſe it appears to us, to ſubvert the Original Conſtitution of Methodiſm, to overturn the Principles on which we firſt held Communion with them; and is in direct Oppoſition to that Economy which we have hitherto been taught to conſider as the Order of Providence.

The Minutes of our Conference, the Rules of our Societies, and the Deeds of our Houſes, all concur in one Teſtimony, namely, *that the Methodiſts are no diſtinct or ſeparate Party*; and the Preachers are there deſcribed as only "*Preachers and Expounders of God's holy Word.*" And though their primary and avowed Call was, and is, to the Church of England, yet they held out the Right-hand of Friendſhip and brotherly love to all, ſaying, *Whoſoever doth the Will of my Father, the ſame is my Brother, and Siſter, and Mother.* By this Means they have had a Door opened unto them in many Places, which otherwiſe would have been entirely ſhut.

If the Methodiſts become an independent Body, they will have an Intereſt to ſupport, which will materially claſh with the Intereſts of the eſtabliſhed Church, as well as with other Parties; and it is probable a Flame of Strife and Diſcord will be kindled in the Nation, greater than has hitherto been known. The Spirit of Chriſtian Love and mutual Forbearance, which the Methodiſts were particularly called to promote, will be abſorbed in the Spirit of Controverſy; to the great Injury, if not the total Deſtruction of many ſincere Perſons.

In ſhort, if the preſent goodly Fabric of Methodiſm, has been raiſed under the peculiar Direction of Providence; we cannot conceive that any Man, or Body of Men, have a Right to pull down the Building, lay a new Foundation, and raiſe another Structure with the old Materials. Let thoſe who do not like the old Building, quit it, and build a new one for themſelves. If they will not do this voluntarily, but continue to diſturb and annoy the peaceable Inhabitants, we entreat you to unite with us in endeavouring to defend and preſerve the ſame as complete and intire as poſſible.

The Attempts that have been lately made to introduce the Ordination Scheme, have produced many and great Evils in various Places, and if perſiſted in, muſt divide the People, and in the End deſtroy the Cauſe."

The BRISTOL TRUSTEES wiſh to appeal to every Denomination of profeſſing Chriſtians in this Nation,—Whether they would permit Perſons who had been admitted into their Connection, under certain known and eſtabliſhed Rules, to make an Alteration in their Conſtitution, ſo as to entirely ſubvert the ſame;—which is the Plan attempted by ſome of the Preachers in Connection with the Methodiſts. They want to form themſelves into a ſeparate independent Church or Party—in flat Contradiction to our eſtabliſhed Rules, and public Declarations for above Fifty Years paſt;—and which inconſiſtent Conduct the Truſtees and others, who wiſh to ſupport the Original Plan, feel themſelves in Duty bound to reſiſt.

AUGUST, 16, 1794.